

## Section IV: Academic Competitiveness Grants (ACG)

### Objectives

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- Provide basic information about the program
- Explain eligibility criteria
- Discuss available options for rigorous program of secondary study
- Explain application process
- Discuss what counselors can do to increase number of eligible students
- Define GPA requirements for second year awards

### Materials

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- PowerPoint Presentation
- ACG/SMART Fact Sheet

### Trainer Tips

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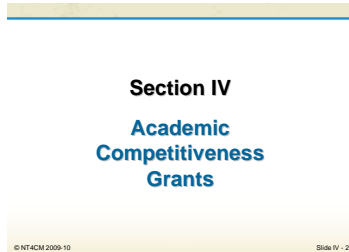
- The instructor's guide is just that, a guide. If you feel more comfortable training from the PowerPoint slides, feel free to do so.
- The material should allow plenty time for questions.
- The student eligibility criteria for ACG changed recently. Stress to counselors that eligible noncitizens and students attending less than full time are now eligible.

# Section IV: Academic Competitiveness Grants (ACG)

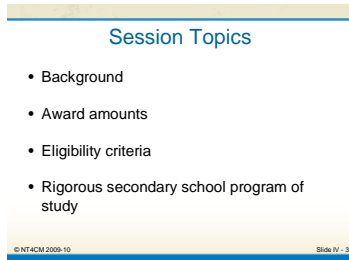
## SLIDE IV-1



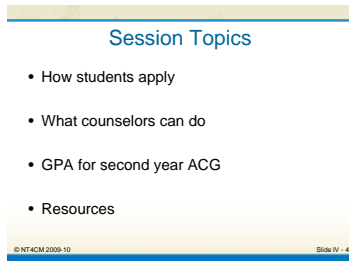
## SLIDE IV-2



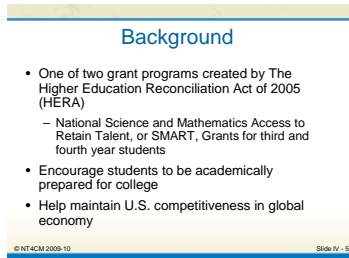
## SLIDE IV-3



## SLIDE IV-4



## SLIDE IV-5



## IV. Academic Competitiveness Grants (ACG)

- Background
- Award amounts
- Eligibility criteria
- Rigorous secondary school program of study
- How students apply
- What counselors can do
- GPA for second year ACG
- Resources

➔ Refer participants to Page 1 of the Handout.

## Background

- One of two grant programs created by the Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005, or HERA
  - Second program is the National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent, or SMART, Grant for third, fourth, and some fifth year students
- Encourage students to be academically prepared for college
- Help maintain U.S. competitiveness in global economy

## SLIDE IV-6

### Award Amounts

- \$750 for first year students
- \$1,300 for second year students

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## SLIDE IV-7

### ACG Eligibility Criteria

- Federal Pell Grant recipient for same award year
- First or second year student in:
  - A two or four year degree program; or
  - A one or two year certificate program offered at a two or four-year degree-granting institution
- Completion of a rigorous secondary school program

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## SLIDE IV-8

### ACG Eligibility Criteria: First Year Students

- Not previously enrolled as a degree seeking student in an undergraduate program while enrolled in high school and below the age of compulsory attendance
- Completed secondary program of study after January 1, 2006

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## SLIDE IV-9

### ACG Eligibility Criteria: Second Year Students

- Completed secondary program of study after January 1, 2005
- Has at least a 3.0 GPA in an eligible program at end of first year of college

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➔ *Before proceeding, ask participants if they think many of their students would qualify for ACG. Ask them why they think students would or would not qualify.*

## Award Amounts

- First year students: \$750
- Second year students: \$1,300

## ACG Eligibility Criteria

- Federal Pell Grant recipient for same award year
- First or second year student in:
  - A two or four year degree program; or
  - A one or two year certificate program offered at a two or four-year degree granting institution
- Completion of a rigorous secondary school program

## ACG Eligibility Criteria: First Year Students

- Not previously enrolled as a degree seeking student in an undergraduate program while enrolled in high school and below the age of compulsory attendance
- Completed secondary program of study after January 1, 2006

## ACG Eligibility Criteria: Second Year Students

- Completed secondary program of study after January 1, 2005
- Has at least a 3.0 GPA in an eligible program from first year of college study

## SLIDE IV-10

### Rigorous Secondary School Program

- State designated programs
- Coursework designated by the Secretary
- AP/IB

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## SLIDE IV-11

### State Designated Programs

- An advanced or honors diploma established by a state and in existence for the 2004-05 or 2005-06 school years
- State Scholar's Initiative
- Submitted state recognized plan

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## SLIDE IV-12

### Coursework Designated by the Secretary

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of mathematics (Algebra I and higher)
- 3 years of science (biology, chemistry, physics)
- 3 years of social studies
- 1 year of a foreign language

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## SLIDE IV-13

### AP/IB

Successful completion of any secondary school program for a student who completes at least two courses with a minimum passing test score on the exams in those courses

- Score of at least 3 for Advanced Placement
- Score of at least 4 for International Baccalaureate

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## SLIDE IV-14

### Rigorous Program Options

- All states have at least one designated rigorous program
- Students from every state have at least three ways to meet rigorous program requirement

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## Rigorous Secondary School Program

- State designated programs
- Coursework designated by the Secretary
- AP/IB

➔ *Refer participants to Page 2 of the Handout for the following discussion.*

## State Designated Programs

- An advanced or honors diploma established by a state and in existence for the 2004-05 or 2005-06 school year
- State Scholar's Initiative
- Submitted state recognized plan

## Coursework Designated by the Secretary

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of mathematics (Algebra I and higher)
- 3 years of science (biology, chemistry, physics)
- 3 years of social studies
- 1 year of a foreign language

## AP/IB

- Successful completion of any secondary school program for a student who completes at least two courses with a minimum passing test score on the exams in those courses
  - Score of at least 3 for Advanced Placement
  - Score of at least 4 for International Baccalaureate

## Rigorous Program Options

- All states have at least one designated rigorous program
- Students from every state have at least three ways to meet rigorous program requirement

➔ *Ask participants if they can identify the rigorous secondary school programs designated in their state.*

## SLIDE IV-15

### Documenting Completion of Rigorous Programs

- Colleges required to collect and retain documentation that a student meets at least one of the options
- Colleges may document the program option that is the most efficient for them
  - Students may eligible under more than one definition of rigorous program

## SLIDE IV-16

### How Students Apply: FAFSA on the Web

- Submit FAFSA
- If data indicates possible eligibility, prompted to answer questions

## SLIDE IV-17

### How Students Apply: Paper FAFSA

- Student Aid Report (SAR) indicates possible eligibility
- Instructed to call Federal Student Aid Center at 1-800-4FEDAID (1-800-433-3243) to answer questions about eligibility

## SLIDE IV-18

### How Students Apply: Self Identification

- Self identify to financial aid office at college
- In person or in writing
  - Will need to submit documentation

## SLIDE IV-19

### What Counselors Can Do

- Encourage students to take rigorous courses
- Provide documentation of completion of rigorous program
  - In a timely manner
  - To students or directly to colleges
- Tell students about the program

## Documenting Completion of Rigorous Programs

- Colleges required to collect and retain documentation that confirms a student meets at least one of the rigorous program options
- Colleges may document the eligibility option that is the most efficient for the them
  - Students may meet more than one definition of rigorous program

## How Students Apply: FAFSA on the Web

- Submit FAFSA
- If data indicates possible eligibility, prompted to answer questions

➔ *Ask participants to turn to Page 3 of the Handout.*

## How Students Apply: Paper FAFSA

- Student Aid Report (SAR) will indicate possible eligibility
- Instructed to call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4FEDAID (1-800-433-3243) to answer questions about eligibility

## How Students Apply: Self Identification

- Self identify to financial aid office at college
  - In person or in writing
  - Will need to submit documentation

➔ *Refer participants to the top of Page 3 of the Handout for the next section of the presentation.*

## What Counselors Can Do

- Encourage students to take courses that meet the definition of “rigor”
- Provide students with documentation showing they have met the rigorous program criterion

- Provide in a timely manner
- Provide to students or directly to college
- Let students enrolled in AP or IB classes know how important it is to take the exams
- Tell students about the program
- ➔ *Ask participants how they are counseling students in reference to ACG. Are students asking them about the grant? Are they working with students early enough to encourage them to complete rigorous courses in order to qualify? Is the incentive of receiving additional grant funds enough to encourage students to pursue a rigorous program?*

## SLIDE IV-20

### GPA for Second Year ACG

- For second academic year, student must have a cumulative GPA of at least a 3.0 from first year
- GPA only checked once, at end of first year

## SLIDE IV-21

### Resources

- <http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/about/ac-smart/state-programs.html>
- Rigorous high school program codes
- Submit a question feature

## SLIDE IV-22

### Questions



## SLIDE IV-23

## GPA for Second Year ACG

- For second year, student must have a cumulative GPA of at least a 3.0 from first year
- GPA only checked once, at the end of first year
  - Cannot gain eligibility during second year

## Resources

- <http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/about/ac-smart/state-programs.html>
  - Rigorous high school program codes
  - Lists by graduation year

## Questions

- Answer questions from participants